



February 2012

Dear Early Education Professionals:

Have you updated your child care skills and education recently? If so, don't forget to save and enter these updates in the state's child care professional registry. This online registry will be available soon. Please continue to check our Virginia Department of Social Services' Web site for more information (www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/professionals_resources.cgi). You will be able to record your training and education, send in documentation for validation of these accomplishments, print a history of your classes, map credentials to Virginia's Career Lattice, print a Registry Certificate that can be used to market yourself for employment, learn about updates in your field, search for resources, and connect with other early educators. (See page 8.)

The professional registry is one of the new state initiatives leading to stronger infrastructure to support child care professionals. Additionally, we have heard the requests for training standards, more accessible training, and training that will lead to credentials. Here are some updates about other statewide infrastructure initiatives that will help you document your qualifications as an early education professional.

- **Virginia Department of Social Services Approved Training** - Standard criteria are being developed to help ensure that state-approved trainings are of high quality and address the Virginia *Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals* (www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/professionals_resources.cgi). VDSS-approved training will be monitored and evaluated based on delivery performance and other factors. Curricula will be available for state-approved trainers, and training will become market-driven and need-based. Reduced registrations and rising training costs have encouraged VDSS to look at alternative training systems. We found that local training events are more appealing to providers and can meet their unique local needs. Consequently, **this will be the last semester VDSS will be offering classroom-delivered training. Instead, VDSS will be offering all Early Childhood and School-Age Endorsement courses (55 courses) year-round through online training, approved curricula to VDSS-approved trainers, and a Web site full of resources and links to training information, including the TIPS Calendar (p. 27) that lists relevant training provided by a variety of organizations statewide.** There are numerous high quality training events being offered by early childhood organizations statewide, and we recommend that these organizations list their training on TIPS.
- All Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) **Early Childhood Endorsement Program and School-age Endorsement Program courses will be online in March 2012.** Many courses are already available now. To register for the online courses, please access: ccwa.vccs.edu/crsSched.cfm?CatID=82. The Early Childhood Endorsement Program is adding two more advanced endorsements which, when combined, provide the required 120 training hours for the national Child Development Associate (CDA) credential (See www.cdacouncil.org for required training categories.). Please see pages 7 and 9 for more information.
- **Over the next several years, we will observe increased collaboration and sharing of resources** across childhood sectors and organizations (i.e., Home Visiting Consortium; Early Intervention; state agencies for education, social services and health; Project Child HANDS; higher education; non-profit organizations; Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time; and others). Check out the "Guidance & Resources" option on this VDSS link at: www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/professionals_resources.cgi.
- **Please take advantage of the NEW VDSS classroom courses this semester that include:**
 - Developing Healthy Habits in Young Children (page 15)
 - Food Safety in the Child Care Environment (page 16)
 - Homework, Holiday and Summer Activities for School-age Children (page 17)

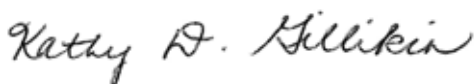
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- Pinch, Pull, Twist, and Turn—Small Motor Development in Early Childhood (page 19)
- Planning Appropriate Activities for School-age Children (page 20)
- Roles of Imagination, Play and Dramatic Play in Early Childhood (page 20)
- Are you struggling with children's behavior issues and aggression? **AI's Caring Pals provides effective strategies for home-based care providers to teach children ages 3-8** about self-control, conflict resolution, and problem-solving. A Teacher Resource Kit is included. (page 13).
- **Due to its popularity, the Virginia Child Care Provider Scholarship Program has exhausted its funding for State Fiscal Year 2012.** College scholarships for the Spring and Summer 2012 semesters are no longer available. Applicants may begin applying for scholarships again during the Fall 2012 application period (June 15 - August 1).

Thank you for your continued efforts to provide the best care for "your" children and the families in the community that you serve. With your dedication, use of respectful behavior management techniques, and the skilled implementation of planned learning activities, you are helping to prepare productive and emotionally-intelligent leaders for tomorrow. Do not underestimate your terrific contribution to society, and the reassurance that families feel knowing that their child is safe and thriving while they earn a living. It is our hope that all caregivers will continue their training and education to strive to meet and exceed any new statewide professional standards, whether through program licensing requirements, the Virginia Star Quality Initiative, accreditation, industry best practices, public demand, or an employer's requirements. As always, the ball is in your court....and we are here to support your child care professional ambitions.

We look forward to serving you in a different capacity, but one that we anticipate will provide a higher level of quality and consistency statewide.

I remain at your service,



Kathy D. Gillikin
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Virginia Department of Social Services

VDSS Mission:

People helping people triumph over poverty, abuse and neglect to shape strong futures
for themselves, their families and communities.